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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of

Numbering Resource Optimization

Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control  
Petition for Rulemaking to Amend the  
Commission's Rule Prohibiting Technology-  
Specific or Service-Specific Area Code Overlays

Massachusetts Department of  
Telecommunications and Energy Petition for  
Waiver to Implement a Technology-Specific  
Overlay in the 508, 617, 781, and 978 Area Codes

California Public Utilities Commission and the  
People of the State of California Petition for  
Waiver to Implement a Technology-Specific or  
Service-Specific Area Code

CC Docket No. 99-200

RM No. 9258

NSD File No. L-99-17

NSD File No. L-99-36

**COMMENTS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN NUMBERING PLAN  
ADMINISTRATOR**

**INTRODUCTION**

The North American Numbering Plan Administrator ("NANPA") submits these comments in response to the Federal Communications Commission's ("Commission" or "FCC") Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("NPRM") in the above captioned proceeding.<sup>1</sup> The NANPA emphasizes at the outset that as a neutral third party administrator, its participation in this proceeding is undertaken solely to provide factual information based upon its experience in performing its assigned functions and to assist the Commission in

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<sup>1</sup> *Numbering Resource Optimization*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, CC Docket No. 99-200, FCC 99-122 (rel. June 2, 1999) ("NPRM").

assembling a complete record. The NANPA expresses no views whatsoever on issues of policy.

## **I. NORTH AMERICAN NUMBERING PLAN ADMINISTRATOR NANP EXHAUST STUDY**

NANPA is obligated to provide an estimate of the exhaust date of the North American Numbering Plan (“NANP”) on an annual basis. NANPA provided its 1999 estimates on April 22 with the most comprehensive study to date on the drivers of demand for NANP resources and the effect of this demand on the life of the NANP. It used two methodologies to estimate exhaust. The first method was a top down approach which estimated the demand for NPAs. The second method was a bottom up approach which estimated the demand for Central Office (“CO”) codes and its effect on demand for NPAs. Both of these approaches estimated the exhaust of the NANP to occur between 2006 and 2012. NANPA has a high degree of confidence in this range of dates.

The report, which can be found at the NANPA website ([www.nanpa.com](http://www.nanpa.com)), provides a detailed description of the models used and the assumptions and sources for the data used. Furthermore, 1999 actual CO code and NPA activations to date are on track with or ahead of the estimates contained in the study.

## **II. UNIFORM DEFINITIONS FOR NUMBER USAGE**

NANPA supports the Commission’s proposals to establish a uniform set of definitions for the status of telephone numbers and agrees that uniform definitions are essential to the effective communications among service providers, NANPA, and regulatory entities. Furthermore, a common set of definitions for number status terms would be of great assistance, especially in the collecting and reporting of number utilization data, to NANPA as it performs its number administration responsibilities.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> NPRM, ¶ 39.

As the FCC noted, the industry has devoted a substantial amount of time and effort in the development of uniform number status definitions.<sup>3</sup> The definitions as outlined in the NPRM now appear in the Industry Numbering Committee (“INC”) guidelines and recommendations. NANPA was part of the INC’s effort to develop these definitions and supports their use. NANPA submits that, to the extent the Commission determines there is a need to further define these terms, the INC definitions represent a firm foundation for discussion.

The Commission asks whether these uniform number status definitions should be codified as part of the FCC’s rules or incorporated into the Central Office (NXX) Code Assignment Guidelines and the Thousand Block Pooling Administration Guidelines (“Guidelines”).<sup>4</sup> At a minimum, NANPA supports including the definitions in the Guidelines. Inclusion in the Guidelines would ensure a single reference source for new service providers requiring telephone numbers. NANPA takes no position on the codification of the definitions.<sup>5</sup>

### **III. NUMBER VERIFICATION AND ENFORCEMENT**

In the assignment and administration of CO codes, NANPA, as the CO Code Administrator, is required to follow the Central Office Code (NXX) Assignment Guidelines (INC 95/0407-008). These guidelines provide the process and procedures that define the responsibilities of the CO Code Administrator as well as code applicants and holders. The

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<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, ¶ 40.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> NANPA notes, however, that as new and innovative products and services are developed, additional uses of telephone numbers will follow, potentially requiring the creation of new number status terms. If these new terms are defined only within the Guidelines, which are incorporated by reference in the rules governing NANPA, the industry, and regulators will have the flexibility to adapt and/or create new categories of numbers and rapidly incorporate them into industry practices.

guidelines also set forth the criteria used by the CO Code Administrator to assign both initial and growth codes.

With regard to initial codes, the applicant, if required, must be licensed or certified to operate in the area and must demonstrate that all applicable regulatory authority required to provide the service for which the CO code is assigned has been obtained. The NANPA is working closely with state commissions to verify that carriers are licensed to operate in an area prior to a code assignment. NANPA has instituted procedures that ensure that when an initial code is requested by an entity not currently operating in the relevant NPA, NANPA will check available sources to determine if the carrier is certified. Among these sources are lists of certified carriers provided by individual state commissions and similar information available via state commission web sites. These methods have allowed NANPA to check the certification of code applicants with minimal delay in the assignment process.

For growth codes, the FCC tentatively concludes that NANPA “may not allocate additional numbering resources to an applicant, unless the applicant has made a satisfactory demonstration of need.”<sup>6</sup> Under existing practices, code applicants are required to submit Month-to-Exhaust Worksheets. These worksheets contain the code applicant’s most recent six-month growth history plus projected growth in code usage over the next twelve months. If the number of months to exhaust is less than or equal to twelve months (six months in the case of a jeopardy NPA), a code is assigned. If NANPA determines that the code request complies with the Guidelines, it has no authority to question the reasonableness of the carrier’s forecast or to deny the request.

NANPA suggests that if the FCC determines that NANPA should assume any verification or enforcement responsibilities outside the scope of the current Central Office

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<sup>6</sup>NPRM, ¶ 60.

Assignment Guidelines, the Commission should ensure the development of detailed guidelines for carrying out any additional responsibilities for addressing noncompliance.

#### **IV. REPORTING/RECORD-KEEPING REQUIREMENTS**

NANPA agrees with the Commission's conclusion that "it is necessary to strengthen the current system for forecast and utilization data collection," to enhance the accuracy of number use and exhaust predictions, as well as to prevent abuse of the number allocation and administration system.<sup>7</sup> A principal tool used for number utilization analysis and NPA exhaust forecasting has been the Central Office Code Utilization Survey ("COCUS"). The COCUS process is conducted annually and requests each service provider to submit information on the total number of NXX codes assigned to it in each NPA as well as a forecast of the number of CO codes the service provider will require over the next five years. The 1999 COCUS survey also asked service providers to include telephone number utilization data at the NPA level.

The current COCUS survey has certain shortcomings, as identified in the NPRM.<sup>8</sup> For example, participation in the COCUS survey is voluntary, *i.e.*, service providers have no obligation to respond. Also, the COCUS survey relies on service provider forecasts over the next five years but has no mechanism to evaluate the reasonableness of these forecasts. In addition, because the COCUS survey is conducted annually, it is very difficult to forecast the degree to which the rapid introduction and expansion of new entrants to the market will stimulate demand for CO codes.<sup>9</sup>

To address some of the shortcomings of the COCUS survey, NANPA initiated an analysis for the 1999 COCUS that combines a number of different data elements and other

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<sup>7</sup> *Id.*, ¶ 69.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*, ¶ 72.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

information in an effort to substantially improve NPA exhaust predictions. The data elements include: 1) historical CO code assignment data by industry segment (*i.e.*, ILEC, CLEC, CMRS and paging) over the past two years; 2) the number of service providers; 3) the expansion of the service providers' footprints over the same time period; 4) the 1999 COCUS survey responses; 5) recent NPA activity; and 6) CO code rationing. The analysis also incorporates; 1) CO code assignments as of April 1, 1999; 2) the total number of CO codes available for assignment; 3) rate centers by NPA; 4) rationing amounts (if any); and 5) other miscellaneous data (*e.g.*, last NPA relief, type of relief). Using this data, NANPA projected a forecasted CO code growth for each NPA. Further, recognizing the need to account for the impact of unanticipated new entrants and/or the expansion of a footprint in an NPA, NANPA projected a potential number of CO codes required for "non-forecasted" growth over the life of the NPA. The number of months until NPA exhaust was determined by adding the forecasted CO code growth with the amount of codes needed for "non-forecasted" demand.

NANPA is monitoring each geographic NPA within the United States and tracking actual CO code assignments with forecasted demand as projected in the 1999 COCUS. Due to NANPA's concern about the life of the NANP and the quantity of NPA exhausts the industry is experiencing, NANPA feels it is appropriate to provide NPA exhaust projections twice a year rather than once a year. NANPA believes it is important to monitor this activity more closely than is done today. This effort will not require service providers to submit CO code forecast or utilization data.

Based upon the 1999 COCUS, NANPA concluded that the COCUS process can be improved substantially in five areas. First, consideration should be given to making service provider participation in the COCUS survey mandatory. As reported in the NANPA's report to the NANC concerning the 1999 COCUS results, the average NPA response rate to the 1999 survey was 60 percent of the service providers holding codes in the NPA. Moreover, NANPA did not receive input from some of the largest consumers of CO codes.

Second, increased frequency in reporting forecasting data would better register the new service providers entering the market that are stimulating demand for CO codes. Third, the “granularity” of the data reported should be improved to include the identification of initial codes and growth codes and the forecasting of thousand blocks at the rate center level in areas where pooling is planned or is implemented. Fourth, utilization data at the NPA-NXX-X level is required to establish pooling in an NPA. Finally, automated, electronic submission of forecast and utilization data using a mechanized interface would: 1) improve the efficiency of the survey process; 2) improve collection of data; and 3) better manage the increased amount of data.

## **V. RECLAMATION OF NXX BLOCKS**

Reclamation of NXX blocks is an important numbering optimization measure used by NANPA. NANPA reclaims NXX blocks, when necessary, pursuant to procedures set forth in the Central Office Code (NXX) Assignment Guidelines.<sup>10</sup> Based upon NANPA’s experience, reclamation provisions in the Central Office Code (NXX) Assignment Guidelines appear to ensure that CO codes are properly activated or returned.

The Central Office Code Assignment Guidelines allow the NANPA to reclaim codes only if a code has not been activated within six months of assignment by the NANPA. NANPA is informed of an activation when a carrier files with the NANPA a “Part 4 - Confirmation of Code Activation” form (“Part 4”). When a Part 4 is not received within six months, the CO Code assignees are notified, by letter, that a Part 4 is due to the Code Administrator within 6 months of assignment of the CO code. If Part 4 certification is not received within 2 weeks following notification, a registered letter is sent to the service provider requesting a response within 30 days that either confirms activation or returns the assigned NXX code.

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<sup>10</sup> NPRM, ¶ 95.

Recently, the NANPA began the code reclamation process for inactivated codes in eight regions transitioned to the NANPA.<sup>11</sup> The service providers contacted by NANPA have been responsive in returning the Part 4 forms or returning unused NXX codes. To date, 27 unconfirmed assignments have been submitted to INC for resolution.

A CO Code is considered activated when that carrier “has transmitted local routing information to the [Local Exchange Routing Guide.]”<sup>12</sup> and filed a Part 4 with the NANPA. A CO code can be considered activated even if no number from the code has been assigned to an end-user customer.<sup>13</sup> Although the NANPA is active in the code reclamation process, it has no information on the number of CO codes activated in which no number has been assigned to an end-user customer.

In overseeing the reclamation process, NANPA has learned that many service providers were unaware of the requirement to file a Part 4 for each assigned CO code, even though the Central Office Code (NXX) Assignment Guidelines clearly state that this is a responsibility of the code holder. Early indications, however, suggest that the above-described process has worked to help educate service providers about the Part 4 filing requirement.

## **VI. OTHER NUMBER OPTIMIZATION MEASURES**

The NANPA fully supports FCC, state and industry efforts to implement measures that improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of number resource management in the NANP. The NANPA stands ready to work with the FCC, the states and industry to ensure

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<sup>11</sup> Of the 16 regions transitioned to the NANPA, only eight have reached the six-month deadline for CO code activation.

<sup>12</sup> NPRM, ¶ 96 (citation omitted).

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*, at ¶ 96.

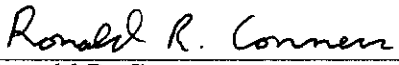


optimum use of numbers. The NANPA takes no position, however, on the relative merit of any of the particular numbering optimization measures.

### CONCLUSION

The NANPA supports the Commission's important and timely efforts to enhance the efficiency with which telecommunications carriers use numbering resources. The development of a uniform set of number status terms and the improvement of the data collection mechanisms for number usage forecasting are significant efforts to help slow the rate of number exhaust and to prolong the life of the NANP.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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July 30, 1999

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Theresa Pringleton, do hereby certify that the foregoing **Comments of the North American Numbering Plan Administrator** were mailed on this 30<sup>th</sup> day of July, 1999 via U.S. First Class Mail and hand delivery (\*) to the following:

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